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MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW DROUGHT ASSISTANCE PACKAGE KICKS IN TODAY

From today NSW farmers and rural communities impacted by the ongoing drought can access an additional \$755 million in support funding as part of the NSW Government's new drought assistance package.

The Emergency Drought Relief package includes increased transport subsidies, more flexible conditions on drought assistance and extra cash for drought-proofing infrastructure.

Minister for Agriculture Adam Marshall said the measures would help reduce pressure on farmers and rural communities feeling the sting of drought.

"More than 97 per cent of NSW is in drought or intense drought and conditions show no sign of abating," Mr Marshall said.

"That's why the NSW Government has introduced a new drought assistance package that kicks in from today, which delivers much needed cost of living pressure relief and more funding for critical measures like transport subsidies and drought-proofing infrastructure.

"The best drought support is rain and lots of it, but while it continues to stay dry, this new and additional funding is the next best thing we as a Government can do."

The new drought assistance package includes:

- \$350 million boost to the Farm Innovation Fund, with loans up to \$1 million
- \$70 million for transport subsidies
- \$50 million to waive Local Land Services rates for 2020
- \$30 million to waive fixed charges for NSW Water and bore licences
- \$15 million for emergency water carting
- \$10 million to waive interest charges for Farm Innovation Fund loans
- \$8.5 million for mental health support, including rural counsellors
- \$5 million for Farm Business Skills programs
- \$10 million for donated fodder transport
- \$5.2 million for rural preschool and long day care centre fee subsidies

"Importantly as this drought has evolved so has the NSW Government's response, and that's why this package has a number of new components such as no new paperwork, more generous transport subsidies and better flexibility in how farmers can use funding"

To apply for assistance or for more information visit www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au

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